

PACKAGE DEAL



GAVIN MCKENZIE



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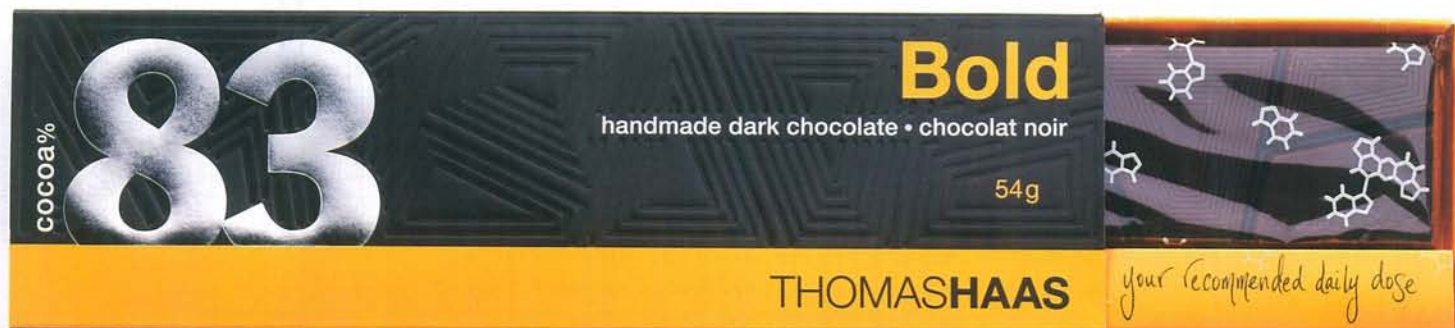
A PACKAGING DESIGNER APPLIES ARTISANAL CRAFT AND METICULOUS DETAIL TO INCREASINGLY LARGE PROJECT COMMISSIONS.

TEXT HANNA TEICHER

ABOVE MARC BRICAULT'S DESIGN FOR VIKRAM VIJ'S SECOND VANCOUVER RESTAURANT—RANGOLI—INCLUDES THE LAYERING OF GLASS PANELS TO CREATE A DYNAMIC PARTITION BETWEEN KITCHEN AND DINING SPACE, AS WELL AS A LUXURIOSLY RED-TILED WALL WITH AN INSET MURAL. **BELOW** BRICAULT'S AWARD-WINNING PACKAGING FOR THOMAS HAAS'S PASTRY SHOP AND COFFEE BAR DEMONSTRATES HIS INTEREST IN CONCEIVING SPACES HOLISTICALLY—BEGINNING WITH THE PACKAGING THAT WILL OCCUPY THE SPACE ITSELF.

Attempting to distinguish his own particular brand of rarefied chocolate bar, Thomas Haas couldn't emphasize handmade enough. Trying to shape his identity, he was digging for the roots that had long been in place, ever since his grandfather started working with chocolate in a village in the Black Forest. Handmade, artisanal,

crafted—all pointed terms which suggest why Marc Bricault was both the perfect foil and the perfect match to design everything from Haas's intimate factory/café to the award-winning boxes for his select chocolate bars. Just as Haas scoffs at Hershey's and Lindt and their forays into so-called artisanal chocolate, Bricault eschews



JOHN SINAI

off-the-shelf options.

For him, each design problem foments a small revolution. When first entering into a dialogue with the chocolate bar that would distinguish itself, Bricault discarded standard confectionery molds. He and Paul Crowley, his longest employee at two and a half years, delved into their material and history. Working with one of only three companies in the world who manufacture the bars, they immersed themselves in the precision of angles of release and scoring depth. Wielding this knowledge, they fabricated an uncommon, fractured chocolate bar where no two pieces are the same, where the gluttonous take the large pieces for themselves, sharing the small ones, while the generous recommend themselves by doing just the opposite.

Bricault relates this experience to their evolving work for Toptable, an umbrella company looking to put their elite chefs' products on the map. "We think about what it's like to unveil, to unwrap, trying to add layers to the experience of even unwrapping your soup." Rather than making an attractive label and sticking it on a soup can, they are re-examining every dimension of soup containment, and are currently leaning toward soup in a box. They are thinking about the box alone, in the hands of the consumer, where it works graphically and functionally. They are also thinking about soup containers displayed as a group, projecting the purveyor's image. Framing each problem to challenge his own assumptions, Bricault discovers ways of enticing the end user and even transforming the client's understanding of his own craft.

As Vikram Vij, Bricault's "breakthrough" client (and proprietor of hugely popular restaurant Vij's) suggests, "Marc always pushes the limits, always studies, always researches." The innovative, cleanly styled packaging for Vij's takeout food took off immediately: requests for the pre-packaged chicken far outstripped the lunch rush at Vij's red-tiled second restaurant Rangoli. Now Vij is pushing his own limits, opening a 20,000-square-foot facility to begin international distribution with the trademark packaging.

Bricault is not an architect, though everyone who works for him is, or is on their way to becoming one. However, architectural concerns are not new to him. He arrived at his current practice almost intuitively, much as he gravitates toward the material samples accreting around him. Beginning with a woodworking shop on Granville Island, his work has always centred on material, but the move toward design was incremental. From building millwork for architects and designing furniture, to designing and building residential interiors, the scale started tipping toward full design/build. In 2000, the practice transitioned into an office, eventually leaving the shop behind in 2002. Not surprisingly, "the strength of the office is that we know how things



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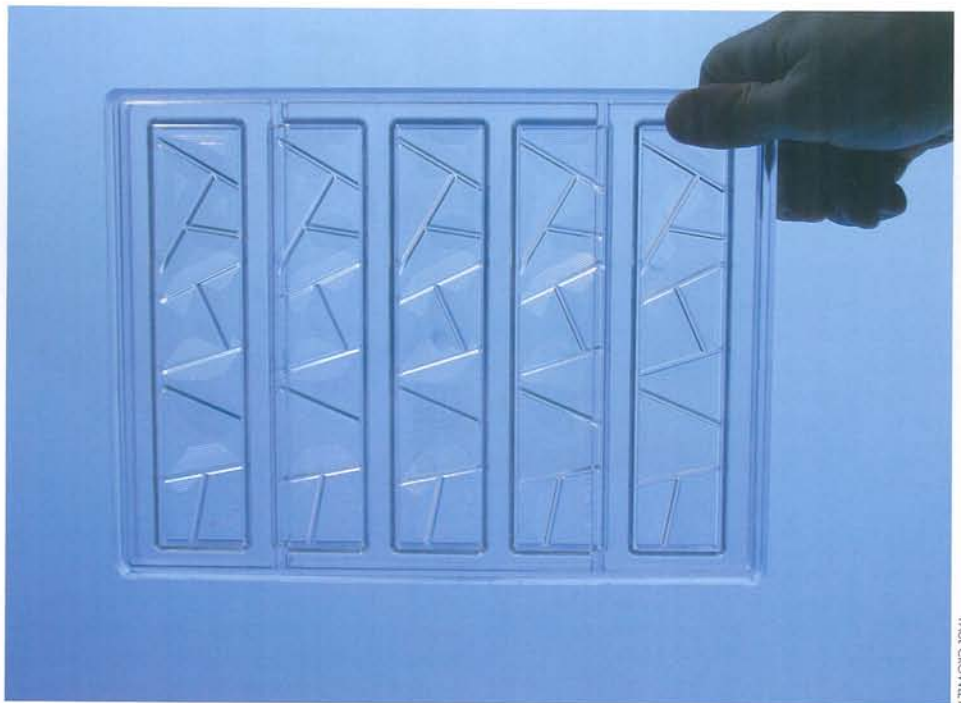
are made," affirms Bricault.

This trait is evident in constant design deliberations with fabricators. Recently, Bricault, Crowley, and Shamus Sachs (the other member of the design team) took advantage of this process to achieve the continually sought-after "blurring of inside and outside." Fiamma Burger, situated on a busy street in Bellingham, Washington, presented the chance to make the most of a small outdoor seating area. The design initially situated a row of seating on both sides of the storefront wall; the team quickly made the leap to seamlessly join the two with a large operable window pro-

ABOVE A VIEW INSIDE THOMAS HAAS'S PASTRY SHOP AND COFFEE BAR IN NORTH VANCOUVER REVEALS THE USE OF GLASS BLOCK—AN ALMOST RETRO-CHIC GESTURE. BUT GLASS BLOCK IS USED IN THIS INSTANCE TO REFERENCE THE SQUARE MORSELS OF CHOCOLATE ON DISPLAY INSIDE THE GLASS SHOWCASE UNITS.



JOHN SINAI



PAUL CROWLEY



MAAC BRICAULT

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE RETHINKING THE VALUE AND POWER OF MARKETING, BRICAULT HAS CREATED MANY AWARD-WINNING PACKAGING CONCEPTS FOR THE LIKES OF VIKRAM VII, THOMAS HAAS AND THE BLUE WATER CAFÉ; BRICAULT HELPED THOMAS HAAS DEVELOP A MOULD FOR A CHOCOLATE BAR THAT BREAKS INTO IRREGULAR PORTIONS; DRAWING FROM ORGANIC CHEMISTRY CHARTS, BRICAULT BASED HIS TEXTURED GLAZING FOR THE CABINETS AT THOMAS HAAS'S SHOP ON THEOBROMINE, AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT FOUND IN THE CACAO BEAN.

viding the necessary weather barrier, but such a large window would have been unwieldy to operate. Their discussion of an automated pulley system with a mechanical engineer led them to a machinist who would be able to design and build the one-off system. With a single piece of Corian forming the inside tables, the sill, and the outside tables, the initial concept invites direct participation as finicky members of a group can settle their differences, two sitting outside, and two sitting inside.

The careful consideration invested in such whimsical achievements is poured into more

earnest goals as well, though still with a playful touch. Designing a major addition to his brother's house in Venice, California, Bricault initially pushed the implementation of a green roof, rain-water and greywater capture, and solar shading. The client's concern that the site not feel too built-out also reinforced the green agenda. Bricault arrived at a solution to accommodate the family while maintaining just as much permeable surface on the site. A stair conceived of as a lantern draws people to the roof, ensuring that the family fully inhabits this green space, where they can enjoy the presence of a single citrus tree



DAVID SCHERRER



MARC BRICAULT



JOHN SINAI



DANNA KINSKY

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT BRIGHT-RED COAT TREES AND POLYCHROMATIC WOOD PANNELLING GREET DINERS AT FIAMMA BURGER; TWO VIEWS OF A DESK BEING ASSEMBLED AT BRICAULT'S WORKSHOP; THE STEEL "LANTERN" TO BE INSTALLED ABOVE THE STAIRCASE IN THE HOME OF BRICAULT'S BROTHER IN VENICE, CALIFORNIA.

while gazing upon the adjacent roof "meadow." Bricault is adamant that such results are only possible due to carefully cultivated relationships with contractors and trades. Though design intent is the driver, the projects only coalesce during building as everyone is empowered to participate as a craftsman.

Prophylactic worrying has done its job, and projects keep coming in at bigger and bigger scales. A new project in Brooklyn involves restoring a 7,000-square-foot haphazardly divid-

ed brownstone; the reunified residence will be powered by a 10 MW photovoltaic system pumping energy back into the grid. While some might say that Bricault is moving into architecture, he maintains the opposite: "the packages are just getting bigger and bigger." **CA**

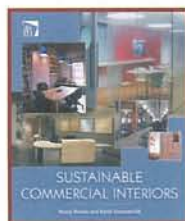
Hannah Teicher currently works for B Squared Architecture and Jill Anholt Design in Vancouver.

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